

UNIT 11

Past Simple (Was/Were - Had)

Was/Were



Bob is eighty. **He's** old and weak.
Mary, his wife **is** seventy-nine. **She's** old too.



Fifty years ago they **were** young. Bob **was** strong. He **wasn't** weak. Mary **was** beautiful. She **wasn't** old.

- ◆ The past simple of the verb "to be" is **was** for **I, he, she, it** and **were** for **we, you, they**.
We form questions by putting **was/were** before the subject pronoun (I, you, he, etc.). e.g. *She was ill yesterday.* → **Was she** ill yesterday?
We form negations by putting **not** after was/were. e.g. *She was not ill yesterday.* / *She wasn't ill yesterday.*

Affirmative	Negative		Interrogative
	Long form	Short form	
I was	I was not	I wasn't	Was I?
You were	You were not	You weren't	Were you?
He was	He was not	He wasn't	Was he?
She was	She was not	She wasn't	Was she?
It was	It was not	It wasn't	Was it?
We were	We were not	We weren't	Were we?
You were	You were not	You weren't	Were you?
They were	They were not	They weren't	Were they?

- 1** Fill in the short forms as in the example.

Long Form	Short Form
1 He was not in Paris.	He ..wasn't.. in Paris.
2 They were not at home.	They at home.
3 Tom was not at school.	Tom at school.
4 The girls were not with us.	The girls with us.
5 Sophia was not in the park.	Sophia in the park.

- 2** In pairs, ask and answer questions using the prompts below, as in the example.

SA: *Where were you at 8 o'clock yesterday?*
SB: *I was at the cinema.*

- you / cinema
- Helen / park
- Tom and Mary / theatre
- Mr Miller / work
- Doris / home
- you and the boys / supermarket

Use

We use the past simple for actions which finished at a definite stated time in the past. That is, we know when the action happened.



They **were** in Berlin last month.
(When? Last month.)



He **was** in hospital two weeks ago.
(When? Two weeks ago.)

Time Expressions

Time expressions used with the past simple include:

yesterday, last week, last month, last year, two days/ weeks/months/ years ago, in 1975, etc.

3

Fill in the gaps with *am*, *is*, *are*, *was* or *were*.

- I **am** cold. Please, close the windows.
- Tom and Jean in Spain last week.
- Sarah ten years old in 1995.
- George tired. He is going to bed now.
- I a secretary. I work in a big office.
- Tom at Peter's house yesterday.
- Mum and Dad at home last night.
- Terry my friend. He lives next door.
- Alison and Kate late for school yesterday.
- the cameramen at the studio now?

Short Answers

In short answers we only use *Yes* or *No*, the personal pronoun and the verb form *was/wasn't* or *were/weren't*. We do not repeat the whole question.

e.g. *Were you late yesterday?* Yes, I was/No, I wasn't.

Were you ...?

Yes, I was/we were.

No, I wasn't/we weren't.

Was he/she/it ...?

Yes, he/she/it was.

No, he/she/it wasn't.

Were they ...?

Yes, they were.

No, they weren't.

Note: We use the past simple to talk about people who are no longer alive.

4

Fill in *was*, *wasn't*, *were* or *weren't*.

- "...**Was**... Marilyn Monroe a famous actress?" "Yes, she **was**..."
- "..... Alfred Hitchcock an actor?" "No, he He a famous director."
- "..... Beethoven, Mozart and Chopin directors? No, they "They composers."
- "..... Thomas Edison a singer?" "No, he "He an inventor."
- "..... Abraham Lincoln and George Washington presidents of the USA?" "Yes, they"

5

Put the words in the correct order to make questions. Then, match the questions to the answers.

- was / with / you / who?
 - the meeting / at / were / people / how many?
 - you / were / sad / why?
 - last night / you / at / home / were?
 - open / was / shop / the?
 - were / much / tickets / the / how?
- a No, it was closed.
b Forty-five.
c £20.
d Because I was alone.
e No, I was out.
f **Who was with you?** Aunt Mary.

There was/There were

This is a modern town today.

There are a lot of tall buildings and shops.

There are cars and **there isn't** much peace and quiet.



This is the same town fifty years ago.

There weren't any tall buildings. **There were** some old houses. **There weren't** many cars and **there wasn't** much noise.



◆ **There was/There were** is the past simple form of **There is/There are**.

We use **there was** in the singular. e.g. **There was** a post office in the street thirty years ago.

We use **there were** in the plural. e.g. **There were** a few houses in the street thirty years ago.

We put **was/were** before **there** to form questions. e.g. **Was there** a post office in the street thirty years ago? **Were there** any houses in the street thirty years ago?

We form negations by putting **not** after **was/were**. e.g. **There was not/wasn't** a post office in the street thirty years ago. **There were not/weren't** any houses in the street thirty years ago.

Affirmative

Negative

Interrogative

Long form

Short form

There was
There were

There was not
There were not

There wasn't
There weren't

Was there?
Were there?

Short Answers

◆ In short answers we only use **Yes** or **No** and **there was/were**. We do not repeat the whole question.

Was there a book on the desk?

Yes, there was.
No, there wasn't.

Were there any people in the shop?

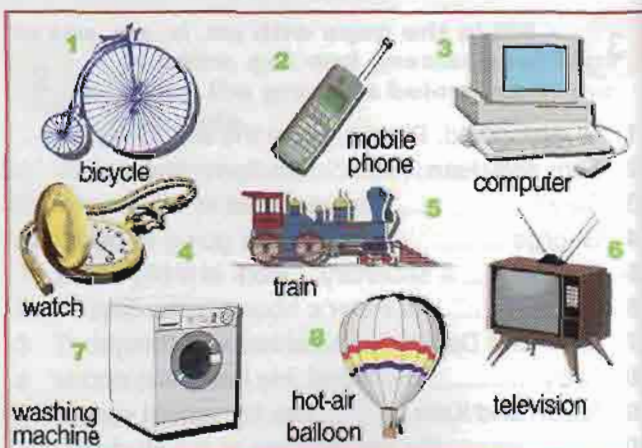
Yes, there were.
No, there weren't.

6

In pairs, look at the objects and ask and answer questions as in the example.

SA: *Were there bicycles a hundred years ago?*

SB: *Yes, there were.*



Had

Grandpa, **did** you
have a TV when you
were five?



No, I **didn't**. People
didn't have TV's then.
They **had** radios.

- ◆ The past simple of the verb **have (got)** is **had**. It is the same in all persons.
We form questions with the auxiliary verb **did**, the subject pronoun and the verb **have**. e.g. *Did you have many toys when you were a child?*
We form negations with **did not** and **have**. e.g. *I did not/didn't have many toys when I was a child.*

Affirmative

I had
You had
He had
She had
It had
We had
You had
They had

Negative

Long form

I did not have
You did not have
He did not have
She did not have
It did not have
We did not have
You did not have
They did not have

Short form

I didn't have
You didn't have
He didn't have
She didn't have
It didn't have
We didn't have
You didn't have
They didn't have

Interrogative

Did I have?
Did you have?
Did he have?
Did she have?
Did it have?
Did we have?
Did you have?
Did they have?

7

Fill in the short forms as in the example.

Long Form

- He did not have any money.
- They did not have lunch.
- She did not have many books.
- Tina did not have any friends.

Short Form

- He **didn't have** any money.
They lunch.
She many books.
Tina any friends.

8

Fill in the gaps with **had** or **did ... have**.

- Did** ... you **have** ... a lesson last night?
- Ben toothache yesterday.
- They not a good time at the dance.
- Mr and Mrs Newton a big party last night.
- She not many sandwiches for lunch.
- you a dog when you were a child?

Short Answers

In short answers we only use Yes or No, the subject pronoun and the auxiliary verb *did/didn't*. We do not repeat the whole question.

e.g. Did you have much money? Yes, I did./No, I didn't.

Did you ...?	Yes, I/we did.	No, I/we didn't.
Did he/she/it ...?	Yes, he/she/it did.	No, he/she/it didn't.
Did they ...?	Yes, they did.	No, they didn't.

9

In pairs, look at the objects and ask and answer questions as in the example.

SA: Did you have a rocking horse when you were five years old?

SB: Yes, I did./No, I didn't.



rocking horse



teddy bear



drum



skateboard



pram



school bag



mobile phone



watch



cat



ring

10

Fill in *was, were, have or had*. Then, in pairs, act out the dialogue.

Lisa: Where 1) *...were...* you last night?

Helen: I 2) at Jenny's house.

Lisa: Did she 3) a party?

Helen: Yes, it 4) her birthday.

Lisa: Did you 5) fun?

Helen: Yes, we 6) a lovely time.

We use *there was/were* to say what existed and *it was/they were* to talk about what we have already mentioned.

e.g. *There was* a sofa in the room.

(NOT: ~~It was a sofa in the room.~~) *It was* big and comfortable.

There were trees in the garden.

(NOT: ~~They were trees in the garden.~~) *They were* apple trees.

11

Fill in *there was, it was, there were or they were*.

- 1 *...There were...* twenty people at the party.
...They were... all John and Patty's friends.
- 2 a car outside my house this morning.
..... a white sports car.
- 3 a lot of messages for Paul at the office.
..... all from his boss.
- 4 a hundred guests at the wedding.
..... all relatives.
- 5 no clouds in the sky yesterday.
..... a beautiful day.
- 6 a call for you this morning.
..... your friend Tony.
- 7 lots of holes in my jacket.
..... very old.
- 8 a lot of people in the room.
..... very crowded.

12

Correct the mistakes.

- 1 Did Jim had a bath this morning?
- 2 There was a telephone call for me?
- 3 Was your parents on holiday in June?
- 4 Mary had not a party yesterday.
- 5 There weren't not any biscuits left in the tin.

13 Fill in the gaps with was, were or have.

1 Did you a nice flight?



2 there any mail this morning?



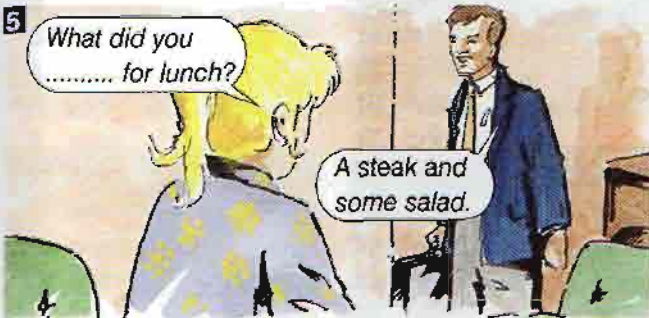
3 you late for school today?



4 there anything good on T.V. last night?



5 What did you for lunch?



ORAL Activity

Look at the two pictures below. Picture A shows the town of Barton as it is now and picture B shows Barton as it was many years ago. In pairs, ask and answer questions using the prompts below as in the examples.

e.g. SA: Was Barton different many years ago?

SB: Yes, it was.

SA: Were there any tall buildings?

SB: No, there weren't.

different - tall buildings - houses - cars - shops - wide streets - trees - crowded



WRITING Activity

Now, using the pictures and your notes from the Oral Activity complete the text about Barton.

This is Barton. It 1) a modern town. In the main street there 2) lots of tall buildings. The road 3) very busy because it is in a big shopping area. There 4) lots of cars, buses and people, but there 5) any trees. Fifty years ago Barton was very different. There weren't any